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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/078,290	02/18/2002	Michael Patrick Anspaugh	DP-302033	3396

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EXAMINER

LUONG, VINH

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3682

DATE MAILED: 10/29/2002

#2

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.	10/078,290	Applicant(s)	ANSPAUGH et al.
Examiner	Luong	Art Unit	3682

— The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address —

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136 (a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____.

2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-15 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above, claim(s) 14 and 15 is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-13 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claims 1-15 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on 2/18/02 is/are a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13) Acknowledgement is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some* c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

*See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.


Vinh T. Luong

14) Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e). Primary Examiner

a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15) Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____

2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)

3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s). _____ 6) Other: _____

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1. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:
 - I. Claims 1-13, drawn to a snap-on steering column shroud assembly, classified in class 74, subclass 606 R.
 - II. Claims 14 and 15, drawn to a snap-on steering column shroud assembly mounting method, classified in class 29, subclass 453.
2. Inventions II and I are related as process and apparatus for its practice. The inventions are distinct if it can be shown that either: (1) the process as claimed can be practiced by another materially different apparatus or by hand, or (2) the apparatus as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process. MPEP § 806.05(e). In this case, the process as claimed can be practiced by hand. For example, one can use the hand to snap the upper shroud into the lower shroud. Alternatively, the process as claimed can be practiced by another materially different apparatus that does not have, e.g., the guide blade (see claims 1, 8, and 14). On the other hand, the apparatus as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process, such as, the process to attach a shroud to a steering wheel of a vehicle.
3. These inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and:
 - (a) these inventions have acquired a separate status in the art as shown by their different classification; and/or
 - (b) these inventions have acquired a separate status in the art because of their recognized divergent subject matter; and/or
 - (c) the search required for Group I is not required for Group II.

Therefore, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

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4. Applicant is advised that the reply to this requirement to be complete must include an election of the invention to be examined even though the requirement be traversed (37 CFR 1.143).

5. During a telephone conversation with Mr. Robert L. Stearns on October 25, 2002, a provisional election was made with traverse to prosecute the invention of Group I, claims 1-13. Affirmation of this election must be made by applicant in replying to this Office action. Claims 14 and 15 are withdrawn from further consideration by the examiner, 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

6. Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

7. The oath or declaration is defective. A new oath or declaration in compliance with 37 CFR 1.67(a) identifying this application by application number and filing date is required. See MPEP §§ 602.01 and 602.02.

8. The oath or declaration is defective because non-initialed and/or non-dated alterations have been made to the oath or declaration. See 37 CFR 1.52(c). See the alteration in the post office address of the inventor Robert Dubay.

9. The drawings are objected to because each part of the invention, such as, the axis of the steering shaft in claims 5 and 13 should be designated by a referential numeral or character. A

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proposed drawing correction or corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

10. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the claimed feature(s), such as, the axis of the steering shaft in claims 5 and 13 must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

A proposed drawing correction or corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

11. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities:

(a) each part of the invention, such as, the axis of the steering shaft in claims 5 and 13 should be designated by a referential numeral or character; and

(b) the disclosure contains typographical errors or inconsistent with each other. For example, on page 4 of the specification: (1) line 11, "The shroud assembly 12" should have been "The shroud assembly 10" in order to be consistent with line 13 on same page; and (2) line 17, "upper shroud 14" should have been "upper shroud 34" in order to be consistent with line 14 on same page. Appropriate correction is required.

12. The specification is objected to as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter, such as, "*a first* side elongated guide post" and "*a plurality of first* parting edge snap connectors" in claims 1 and 8. Applicant is respectfully urged to use the same numerical order or

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terminology in the claims and specification. See 37 CFR 1.75(d)(1) and MPEP § 608.01(o).

Correction is required.

13. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

14. Claims 1-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

It is unclear whether a confusing variety of terms, such as, "a first side elongated guide post" in claim 1, "a first side elongate guide post" in claim 8, and "an upper shroud guide post" in claims 6, 7, 12, and 13 refer to the same or different things. See MPEP § 608.01(o) and 2173.05(o). Applicant is respectfully urged to identify each claimed element with reference to the drawings.

15. Claims 1-13 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, set forth in this Office action.

16. As allowable subject matter has been indicated, applicant's reply must either comply with all formal requirements or specifically traverse each requirement not complied with. See 37 CFR 1.111(b) and MPEP § 707.07(a).

17. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure: Lambiris (assembling method), Worrell et al. (snap fasteners 24), Hanada (Fig. 1), Hu et al. (shrouds 40, 140, 45, and 145 in Figs. 1 and 5), Nishitani et al. (shroud assembly 5 in Fig. 5), Sugata (shroud 12 in Fig. 3), Johnson et al. (shroud assembly in Figs. 3-6), Andrei et al. (Fig. 1), Yokota et al. (shrouds 3 and 4), Jolley (Fig. 1), and Pastwa et al. (shroud 20).

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18. Submission of your response by facsimile transmission is encouraged. Group 3600's facsimile number is **(703) 305-7687**. Recognizing the fact that reducing cycle time in the processing and examination of patent applications will effectively increase a patent's term, it is to your benefit to submit responses by facsimile transmission whenever permissible. Such submission will place the response directly in our examining group's hands and will eliminate Post Office processing and delivery time as well as the PTO's mail room processing and delivery time. For a complete list of correspondence not permitted by facsimile transmission, see M.P.E.P. 502.01. In general, most responses and/or amendments not requiring a fee, as well as those requiring a fee but charging such fee to a deposit account, can be submitted by facsimile transmission. Responses requiring a fee which applicant is paying by check should not be submitting by facsimile transmission separately from the check. Responses submitted by facsimile transmission should include a Certificate of Transmission (M.P.E.P. 512). The following is an example of the format the certification might take:

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to the Patent and Trademark Office (Fax No. (703) 305-7687) on _____
(Date)

Typed or printed name of person signing this certificate:

(Signature)

If your response is submitted by facsimile transmission, you are hereby reminded that the original should be retained as evidence of authenticity (37 CFR 1.4 and M.P.E.P. 502.02). Please do not separately mail the original or another copy unless required by the Patent and Trademark Office. Submission of the original response or a follow-up copy of the response after your response has been transmitted by facsimile will only cause further unnecessary delays in the processing of your application; duplicate responses where fees are charged to a deposit account may result in those fees being charged twice.

19. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Examiner Luong whose telephone number is (703) 308-3221. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday from 8:30 AM EST to 7:00 PM EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David Bucci, can be reached on (703) 308-3668. The fax phone number for this Group is (703) 305-7687. Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-1113.

Luong

October 25, 2002



Vinh T. Luong
Primary Examiner